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ABSTRACT

In 1989, the University of Waikato (New Zealand) established Te Timatanga Hou, a program of pre-university remedial study for disadvantaged Maori. Many targeted students come from rural schools that do not offer a seventh-form year nor a wide range of university entrance subjects. Students undertake 1 year of intensive pre-university training after which they attend the university. Language, writing, and communication; basic math; and Maori language are compulsory courses. Two electives are government and society, and natural science. Time management, study, computer, research, and thinking skills are taught to strengthen students' ability to cope with university studies. All teaching staff are Maori, and each of them is committed to the empowerment of Maori students. Whakawhanaungatanga (the nurturing and fostering environment of the family) is a key factor that helps staff and students create a culturally safe environment. There is a comprehensive Maori language program, and the history of Aotearoa since the arrival of the Europeans is taught from a Maori perspective. Each staff member mentors an allotted number of students during the program. About 25 percent of Timatanga Hou students graduate from the mainstream system. In Maori terms, this is a very successful program. These students show that given a chance, in an environment devoid of patronizing and hostile attitudes, and where their identity as Maori is validated and affirmed, they can succeed. (TD)

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Te Timatanga Hou

The New Beginning

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Te Timatanga Hou – The New Beginning

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Hapai Park

TE TIMATANGA HOU

1996

TE TIMATANGA HOU - THE NEW BEGINNING

The Timatanga Hou experience highlights many educational issues that Indigenous peoples face when trying to run a programme to meet the needs of their particular students, commensurate with fulfilling the demands of the powers that be. This paper will consider Te Timatanga Hou, an educational programme designed especially for Māori people disadvantaged by the education system.

BACKGROUND

In 1989, in response to the Government's commitment to social equity, the University of Waikato established Te Timatanga Hou. the intent was to provide a programme of pre-university study for Māori, mainly young people, who had not had access to university through the usual channels; primarily University Entrance from secondary school. Many of the students who were being targeted would come from rural schools that in many cases did not offer a seventh form year, nor a wide range of University entrance subjects. The University acknowledged that much could be done to improve the rates of Māori participation by providing what was termed a special programme of a remedial nature. (Ward, 1991, p.1).

In 1986 Māori comprised 21.7% or one in every five citizens of the population in the University of Waikato's catchment area. (Map, shows catchment area). The area encompasses ngā Iwi o Tainui, ngā Iwi o Te Arawa, ngā Iwi o Mataatua, te Tini o Toi, Ngati Tohora; approximately fifteen principal iwi in total. The geographic make-up of much of the population was rural, and according to a report furnished

to the vice-chancellor in 1988 there existed little knowledge and awareness of tertiary education in many of these areas.

A further consideration was that the University of Waikato was the youngest of the Universities in Aotearoa and was established a time when scarcity of resources for Universities had become a major issue. In light of these particular circumstances the university was not in a position to establish a range of professional and vocational programmes offered by other universities. To a large extent the university was and still is dependent on EFT's allocation (equivalent full time student). Because many professional and vocational programmes were not in place to attract students, many were forced to study outside the region. Unlike other students whose parents were classified in the Professional, Managerial and Business categories, the situation seriously disadvantaged Maori students who did not have the wherewithal to go outside the region to further their studies, . (Erickson, 1988, p.3).

Figures showed that the University had a high percentage of Maori students when compared with other universities at the time. 13% of the total student population was Maori; whereas other universities rarely exceeded 5%. Whilst these figures were encouraging, (and showed the University of Waikato in a better light than other New Zealand universities) , in order for Maori to achieve parity with Pakeha the number of Maori students enrolling had to increase by approximately three and a half times. The Maori participation rates at Colleges of Education and Technical

Institutes were 2.6% and 3.1% better respectively than universities. One of the factors explaining a higher participation rate of Maori at Technical Institutions was the development of special programmes for Maori students, for example, the Maori Trade Training scheme run by the Maori Affairs Department. (Erickson, p.1).

Stated destination of school leavers (1983 data)

Full-time Tertiary Education	Maori	Non-Maori
University	13.7%	86.3%
Teacher's College	35.5%	64.7%
Technical Institutes etc.	42.7%	57.3%

(Tables are based on data held by the Department of Education).

There was a clear consensus in New Zealand political and education circles that the low participation rate of Maori people at the tertiary level was not conducive to a well-education society. Social equity then was foremost in the Government's mind when in 1987 the decision to make a Supplementary University Block Grant was announced. Amongst other things it was hoped that this would increase the rate of successful participation by women, Maori and other groups currently

under-represented in university enrollments. In this climate the Timatanga Hou programmme was conceived.

The under-representation of students from minority ethnic backgrounds was by no means peculiar to Aotearoa or the University of Waikato. In mounting it's own attack on social and educational inequity, the University of Waikato took as it's model the Joseph Saltiel Centre at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. (Ward, 1991, p.1). The distinctive concept of that centre was to invest in remedial training for students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The student would undertake one year of intensive pre-university training at the end of which she or he would carry on into the system and complete on equal terms with other students.

STUDENTS

The university's notions of what sort of characteristics the Timatanga Hou student would have, were as follows:-

- they would not be prepared academically for university
- they would need to be taught study skills
- they would have to be taught how to learn
- they would be lacking in confidence
- they would be socially and economically disadvantaged
- they would be Maori

The Kaiwhakaako or mentors of the Timatanga Hou programme rejected this deficit model as being patronising and inaccurate in its lack of recognition of the many skills and qualities students bring to the programme. More importantly, the assumption that our students would be socially disadvantaged because of the Maori background was rejected outright. The notion that it was maoriness itself that caused the low performance of potential students was rejected along with the idea that potential students would have to leave their "maoriness" at the door if they were to succeed at university. The Kaiwhakaako assert that it is lack of respect for and acknowledgment of Maori people's identity that causes the development of the first five characteristics. Encouragement and promotion of Maori language and Maori identification is an integral part of the Timatanga Hou programme.

That prospective students would lack confidence was of little wonder given their experience of mainstream secondary schooling. Many of our students remember their secondary schooling as a very negative experience with there being little acknowledgment of the positive aspects of being Maori. **Wiremu Te Are** a former Te Timatanga Hou student who graduated with a Law Degree in 1994, remembers secondary school as being:

> ....a hostile environment ..you were patronised by students and teachers alike ...you are Maori going on to 5th form certificate ... you are considered

a freak and treated as such...

In the video clip you are about to see, **Te Awhina Mathews** talks of losing a dream. She says:

> "I went from believing in myself and believing that I could do those things, (i.e. becoming a solicitor) to thinking.....no.....who am I? I'm just a Maori, I don't think I can do it, and it didn't come from my family.....or my friends. The only thing I think it could come from is from some of the attitudes of the teachers I've had in the past..... and definitely from a lot of the media and negative statistics.

Ms Mathews goes on to relate how her experience of the Timatanga Hou programme where she was taught by what she termed as "successful Maori" opened up the world once again where "you can be what you want to be.... the opportunity is there.... TTH gave me that opportunity..... Ms Mathews went through university to successfully complete her Law degree and is now working for her Te Arawa people in Rotorua.

THE MODEL

Like the Saltiel model that was adopted and adapted to suit New Zealand circumstances a full range of teaching programmes in the Humanities, Social

Sciences and Natural Sciences was developed for the Timatanga Hou programme. Put simply the Timatanga Hou programme aims to cover in approximately thirty weeks the same ground that is covered by secondary school programmes in five year. Three courses are compulsory; Toi Kupu (language, writing and communication), a basic maths course, Maori language; with two electives. Te Kawanatanga mē te Roopu Iwi, (Government and Society), and Natural Science which includes Biology, Chemistry and Physics. It was acknowledged that many of our students did require skills and accordingly time management, study skills, research skills, thinking skills, were/are taught in order to strengthen the student's ability to cope with university studies.

The location of Te Timatanga Hou (on the perimeter of the University's grounds) means that the student's have easy access to all the facilities of the University. Throughout the year students familiarise themselves with the Library. Whilst this may seem a small point to many of us who are very familiar with libraries; with its many floors, thousands of square metres of space and banks of computers, the library is a most daunting place. This is because many of our student come from schools where libraries are little bigger than the average classroom size. Computer and research skills are taught as an integral part of their learning for university purposes that, past students acknowledge, stands them in good stead when they eventually get to university.

KAIWHAKAAKO (MENTORS, TEACHERS)

A major factor that contributes to the success of the programme is the programme staff whom Ms Mathews refers to as "successful Maori". All teaching staff are Maori. This is acknowledged by former students of Te Timatanga Hou as being an extremely important factor that contributes to their success. Each of the staff has university qualifications and knowledge of the Maori language and tikanga.

From the outset, Te Timatanga Hou staff have sought to rid the students of their negative expectations of the system and to overcome the negative images many have of themselves. Whakawhanaungatanga (the nurturing and fostering environment of the family) is a key factor that helps staff and students alike create a culturally safe environment. Each of the staff is committed to the empowerment of Maori students. This positive and safe learning environment validates and affirms each student as a Maori.

A comprehensive programme in the Maori language has been established so that students are catered for at all levels. For all of our students, Maori is their second language. The history and governance of Aotearoa since the arrival of the Pakeha is also taught from a Maori perspective, an enlightening experience for the majority of our students. Further care is given by the staff who counsel the students. Each staff member is allotted a number of students who come under his/her wing for the duration of the year's programme.. Individual student progress is constantly

monitored in these pastoral care groups, and the evidence is that in this environment feel free to discuss personal problems that may be interfering with their work.

THE STUDENTS

A number of Te Timatanga Hou students have graduated from, the programme and gone through the University system to successfully complete a degree.

The first intake of Te Timatanga Hou students was in 1989. Of the original 23 who graduated from the TTH programme, 10 have graduated from the University of Waikato.

	1989	1990	1991	1992
Enrolled TTH	30	52	63	69
Graduated TTH	16	26	48	31
Graduated UOW	10	7	5	16

These figures are conservative. It has proved very difficult to track our students through the university administrative system. Some students have gone on to study and complete qualifications at other New Zealand universities or polytechnics. Others have won jobs on the strength of partially completed degrees. Others from these years are currently completing degree programmes

having taken a year or two off. usually because of family responsibilities.

Te Awhina Mathews is one of the many Maori students who has successfully completed the Timatanga Hou programme and thereafter obtained a university degree of one kind or another. These student attest to the fact that given a chance in an environment devoid of patronising and hostile attitudes and where their identity as Maori is validated and affirmed; many of the Maori considered failures by the Pakeha system can succeed.

By whose terms do we measure success then? These statistics show that perhaps a mere 25% of our students graduate from the mainstream system with a degree. Perhaps in the Pakeha terms this is no measure of success. I suggest that in Maori terms Te Timatanga Hou is indeed a very successful programme. Successful in that the 40 odd students who have graduated from the University of Waikato not only benefit their iwi but society at large. Successful in that they become role models for their hapu, iwi, both their own generation and future generations. Successful in that the become the pride of their koroua and kuia and someone for their iwi to celebrate, but most of all; in breaking with a tradition of negativity in the education system, the students deem themselves successful and in turn are deemed successful by their whānau, hapu and iwi.

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